



LEGAL AID SOCIETY
PURSUING JUSTICE. RESTORING HOPE.

Domestic Violence Advocacy Program

- Domestic violence accounts for 30% of the murders of women and 5% percent of the murders of men.
- 50% of men who abuse their wives also abuse their children.
- Children witness domestic violence at home every day.
- Domestic violence is preventable.
- Victims of domestic violence face the highest level of danger when they attempt to leave their abuser.
- It can take a victim seven attempts to successfully leave.
- Victims of domestic violence are more likely to return to their abusers when they do not have access to sufficient support and resources.

Background

The Domestic Violence Advocacy Program provides legal representation to victims of domestic violence at Domestic Violence Order (DVO) hearings in Jefferson Family Courts. The Domestic Violence Advocacy Program relies on volunteers from the legal community to provide this service to those who cannot obtain private counsel due to poverty or a lack of access to sufficient financial resources. Legal Aid will recruit, train and organize volunteer attorneys to promote this pro bono effort.

How the Domestic Violence Advocacy Program Works

Numerous local law firms and many members of the private bar have volunteered to provide direct representation to victims of domestic violence at Domestic Violence Order (DVO) hearings. Clients can apply for this service at the time they file for a Domestic Violence Order at the courthouse. Legal Aid will work with the client, investigate the case and prepare the case for the hearing. The pro bono attorney will consult with the client and provide representation at the hearing.

In addition to these volunteer efforts, the University of Louisville Law Clinic, under the direction of Shelley Santry, is collaborating with the Domestic Violence Advocacy Program to include students in this program in the future.

Training

All volunteer attorneys will be trained to work with victims of domestic violence, to understand the unique dynamics at play when domestic violence occurs and to represent victims of domestic violence at Domestic Violence Order hearings. The first training is scheduled to be held on May 22, 2009 at the Louisville Bar Association. The training is free to those who agree to participate in the program. Attorneys interested in attending the May 22nd training should contact the Louisville Bar Association to register. Subsequent trainings will be scheduled on a regular basis. Attorneys interested in volunteering should contact Neva-Marie Polley at the Legal Aid Society at NPolley@laslou.org or (502) 584-1254 ext. 3121.

A Collaborative Effort

This project was developed through the collaborative efforts of the Legal Aid Society, the Mary Byron Foundation, the Center for Women and Families, the Louisville Bar Association, the Louisville Bar Association Family Law Section, the Pro Bono Consortium, Stites & Harbison, the Jefferson County Attorney's Office, the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, Metro Government Office for Women, the Office of the Circuit Court Clerk of Jefferson County, and the Mortality Review Committee. Verizon Wireless, in partnership with Legal Aid Society,

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